(a) the details of agricultural, mineral, forestry, industrial, textile and other products being exported from Himachal Pradesh for the last three years, year-wise and item-wise;

(b) the percentage of these items being exported annually, item-wise;

(c) the items exported from the State during last three years together with the item-wise export and profit thereof; and

(d) the specific steps being taken to encourage the export from Himachal Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) The Central Government maintains export data for the country as a whole and, not State-wise. The main items of export from Himachal Pradesh are Agricultural and Horticultural Products. Apples are the main item of export from the State.

(d) An Export Promotion Industrial Park has been sanctioned in Himachal Pradesh at Baddi. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has provided financial assistance to (i) Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation, Shimla for trial shipments for Kinnaur Apples to UK with technical assistance from ENZA, a division of New Zewland Apple and Pear Marketing Board and (ii) purchase of Laboratory equipment for an in-house quality control Laboratory during the current year.

Merger of Sick Tea Gardens

18. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to give away all the sick tea gardens of Tea Trading Corporation of India to another sick PSU namely Balmer Lawrie; and

(b) if so, what is the rationale of such a decision?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (b) Tea Trading Corporation of India (TTCI), a wholly owned subsidiary of STC, is facing an acute finanacial crunch being a loss making company and has been unable to discharge its obligations. The total liability of the Company is estimated around Rs. 36 crores as on 31.1.1997

TTCI has filed a petition in the Calcutta High Court for liquidation of the company. The case is now pending in the Court. There is no decision to give away all the sick tea gardens of TTCI to Balmer Lawrie.

Indo-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement

19. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indo-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement signed in December, 1998 and which was to come into force from 1st March, 1999, is yet to be implemented;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to resolve the difficulties in the implementation of the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Agreement envisaged exchange of lists between the two sides regarding items to be covered under tariff reductions as well as items on which on tariff preferences would be available. The lists were accordingly exchanged in February, 1999. However, the Sri Lankan side expressed reservations regarding inclusion of some items in India's negative list. India has also requested Sri Lanka to delete some items of its export interest from Sri Lanka's negative list. There have been further discussions to resolve the differences.

Growth Centres in Gujarat

20. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are backward districts in Gujarat and Kutch is one of them;

(b) whether out of seventy growth centres proposed to be developed sixty-six centres have been approved and not a single growth centre has been allotted to Gujarat; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to open a growth centre in remote area of the Kutch district?